DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 470 012 CG 032 023

AUTHOR	Tryon, Georgiana Shick; Bishop, Josephine; Hatfield, Teresa A.
TITLE	School Psychology Graduate Students' Beliefs about Dissertation Authorship Credit.
PUB DATE	2002-08-00
NOTE	8p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Psychological Association (110th, Chicago, IL, August 22-25, 2002).
PUB TYPE	Reports - Research (143) -- Speeches/Meeting Papers (150)
EDRS PRICE	EDRS Price MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	*Doctoral Dissertations; *Ethics; Graduate Students; Higher Education; *Journal Articles; *School Psychology; *Student Attitudes
IDENTIFIERS	*Authorship

ABSTRACT

This study used 8 vignettes to investigate 331 school psychology graduate students' beliefs concerning the desirability and ethicalness of origin of a dissertation idea and authorship credit of an article based on the dissertation. The vignettes varied according to who originated the dissertation idea (graduate student or advisor), who wrote an article based on the dissertation (graduate student or advisor), and authorship credit for that article (graduate student or advisor listed as either sole or principal author). Responses to the vignettes by respondents indicated that they believed it is more desirable and ethical for a dissertation design to be the student's rather than the advisor's idea. Respondents also believed that it is more desirable and ethical for the student to be either sole or first author of an article based on the dissertation, regardless of who (student or advisor) originated the dissertation idea or wrote the resulting paper. (Contains 11 references and 2 tables.) (Author/GCP)

Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made
from the original document.

ED 470 012

School Psychology Graduate Students' Beliefs about Dissertation Authorship Credit

By

Georgiana Shick Tryon
Josephine Bishop
Teresa A. Hatfield

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☐ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

G. Tryon

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

CG032023

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

School Psychology Graduate Students' Beliefs about Dissertation Authorship Credit[1]

Georgiana Shick Tryon

Josephine Bishop

Teresa A. Hatfield

The City University of New York Graduate School and University Center

This study used eight vignettes to investigate 331 school psychology graduate students' beliefs concerning the desirability and ethicalness of origin of a dissertation idea and authorship credit of an article based on the dissertation. The vignettes varied according to who originated the dissertation idea (graduate student or advisor), who wrote an article based on the dissertation (graduate student or advisor), and authorship credit for that article (graduate student or advisor listed as either sole or principal author). Responses to the vignettes by respondents indicated that they believe it is more desirable and ethical for a dissertation design to be the student's rather than the advisor's idea. Respondents also believed that it is more desirable and ethical for the student to be either sole or first author of an article based on the dissertation, regardless of who (student or advisor) originated the dissertation idea or wrote the resulting paper.

According to Koocher and Keith-Spiegel (1998) disputes over authorship credit "are among the most common complaints to ethics committees that arise from the academic-scientific sector of psychology" (p. 406). The ethical code of the American Psychological Association (APA, 1992) states that psychologists should receive authorship credit only when they have actually contributed to a project, and that the person who makes the greater contribution should be listed as the first author. Despite these guidelines, authorship credit concerns are prevalent, particularly when the contributors differ in professional status (i.e., professor and graduate student). A survey of graduate student and faculty publication problems (Holaday & Yost, 1993) found that graduate students reported significantly more ethical dilemmas associated with authorship credit than did faculty, and that graduate student authorship concerns were particularly prevalent when students published with a higher status person, such as a professor.

Authorship credit is of particular concern when the project is a student's dissertation. Dissertations are usually collaborative efforts between students and faculty advisors. Students vary in their need for advisor assistance with some requiring extensive input into the dissertation while others need minimal help (Goodyear, Crego, & Johnston, 1992). The APA ethics code states that on publications resulting from a student's dissertation, the student is generally listed as the principal author. Despite this, a survey by Costa and Gatz (1992) found that most graduate students would give faculty advisors first authorship if their input into the dissertation was high, and that few respondents would give a student sole authorship even when advisor input was quite low. In a more recent survey (Rose & Fischer, 1998), graduate students were asked to rate the ethicalness of authorship in a vignette where the student originated the dissertation idea and did most of the work for the project under the advisor's supervision. The advisor then took principal authorship on the resulting manuscript for publication that was worked on equally by both student and advisor. Respondents to this survey believed that the advisor's behavior with regard to authorship was highly unethical.

The current research is an attempt to further clarify graduate students' beliefs concerning the ethicalness of authorship credit on articles resulting from dissertations by examining how

---

[1] Paper presented at the meeting of the American Psychological Association, Chicago, IL, August 2002.
Correspondence should be sent to Georgiana Shick Tryon, PhD, Ph.D. Program in Educational Psychology, CUNY Graduate Center, 365 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10016. E-mail: gtryon@gc.cuny.edu.

ethical doctoral students in school psychology believe it is for students or advisors to claim first or sole authorships on dissertations originating from students' or advisors' ideas. Research indicates that there is sometimes a discrepancy between what psychologists believe is ethical and how they actually behave (i.e., Bernard & Jara, 1986; Keith-Spiegel, Tabachnick, Witley, & Washburn, 1998; Smith, McGuire, Abbott, & Blau, 1991). Sometimes unethical behavior may seem more desirable or expedient than ethical behavior. This research, therefore, investigated doctoral students' beliefs concerning the desirability of students' or advisors' claims of first or sole authorships on dissertations originating from students' or advisors' ideas. Research in this area has tended to focus on samples of graduate students from various academic disciplines. To prevent potential confounding of results with student majors, the present study used doctoral students in school psychology, the discipline of the authors of this research.

Method

Participants

Participants were 331 doctoral students in school psychology who were members of the American Psychological Association of Graduate Students (APAGS). Of those who indicated sex, 84.5% (n = 277) were women, and 15.5% (n = 51) were men. Participants average age was 32.29 years (SD = 8.17). Respondents had an average of 4.57 years of graduate study (SD = 2.11). The majority of respondents to the specific questions (n = 266) were Caucasian, with the highest percentage (46.5%) residing in the Northeast (n = 152). These demographic statistics are similar to those reported by Curtis, Chesno Grier, Abshier, Sutton, and Hunley (2002) for practicing school psychologists. Most respondents were from APA accredited programs (n = 287), had taken an ethics course (n = 271), and had published or presented a paper with a faculty member (n = 198).

Instrument

The dissertation vignette questionnaire asks each participant to respond to a vignette describing a collaborative dissertation process between graduate student and advisor. The questionnaire has eight versions that vary according to who originated the dissertation idea (graduate student or advisor), who wrote an article based on the dissertation (graduate student or advisor), and authorship credit for that article (graduate student or advisor listed as either sole or principal author). The Appendix presents a key to the content of the eight vignettes. Following each vignette, participants are requested to respond on six-point scales to four questions concerning the ethicalness and desirability of the origin of the dissertation idea and the authorship credit. As an example the, Appendix shows vignette number 1 with questions. Respondents are also asked for demographic information and asked questions regarding whether the graduate student has ever published an article or presented a paper with faculty, and if so, asked to indicate when in the publication process authorship was discussed. Students are then asked to rate their overall experience while collaborating with faculty on a four-point scale. Students are also asked if they have taken an ethics course and whether or not their school psychology program is APA accredited.

Procedure

Mailing labels for 700 randomly selected APAGS doctoral students in school psychology were obtained from the APA Research Office in early September 2001. Each graduate student was sent a questionnaire containing one of the eight vignettes in early October. Each of the eight vignettes was thus sent to 87 or 88 students. In mid-November, a second mailing of questionnaires was sent to students in the sample who had not responded previously. Of the 700 questionnaires sent, 28 were returned as undelivered. This reduced the possible sample to 672. The 331 useable responses correspond to a 49% return rate.

Results

Responses to the questionnaire answers were analyzed via an 8 (vignette number) X 4 (question) multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA). There was a significant main effect for vignette number, $F(7, 313) = 45.14$, $p < .001$.

Individual analyses of variance (ANOVAs) showed that the doctoral students' responses to each question differed according to the vignette answered. Doctoral students differed in their rating of the desirability of the origin of the dissertation idea, $F(7, 313) = 3.65$, $p < .002$. Table 1 presents means and standard deviations for the responses to this item. Post hoc individual Bonferroni comparisons showed that students rated vignette 7, where the advisor suggested the

dissertation idea, as significantly less desirable than vignettes 1, 2, 3, and 4, where the doctoral student suggested the dissertation idea.

Doctoral students also differed in their rating of the desirability of the authorship credit given on the paper resulting from the dissertation, $F(7, 313) = 37.78$, $p < .001$. Means and standard deviations for this item are also presented in Table 1. Post hoc individual Bonferroni comparisons showed that students rated vignettes 1, 3, 7, and 8, where the student was listed as either sole or first author, as significantly more desirable than vignettes 2, 4, 5, and 6, where the advisor was listed as either sole or first author. There were no differences in ratings of desirability of authorship credit related to who (advisor or student) wrote the paper or who originated the dissertation idea.

Table 1

Means and Standard Deviations of Ratings for each Vignette of the Desirability of Origin of Dissertation Idea and Authorship Credit

Vignette Number	Statistics	Desirability of Idea	Desirability of Author Credit
1	Mean	2.48	4.52
(29)	Std.	1.40	1.82
2	Mean	2.33	1.98
(45)	Std.	1.21	1.34
3	Mean	2.26	4.64
(47)	Std.	.98	1.99
4	Mean	2.27	2.63
(41)	Std.	.92	1.83
5	Mean	1.77	1.84
(43)	Std.	1.41	1.57
6	Mean	2.18	1.91
(45)	Std.	1.77	1.28
7	Mean	1.38	5.26
(39)	Std.	.88	1.58
8	Mean	1.71	5.17
(35)	Std.	1.05	1.56

Note. Parenthetic numbers represent the number of respondents to each vignette. Desirability of idea ratings range from 1 (very desirable) to 6 (very undesirable). Desirability of outcome ratings range from 1 (very undesirable) to 6 (very desirable).

Table 2 presents means and standard deviations for school psychology doctoral students' ratings of the ethicalness of the origin of the dissertation idea and authorship credit. ANOVA results indicate a significant difference in student ratings for the ethicalness of the development of the dissertation idea, $F(7, 313) = 4.77$, $p < .001$. Post hoc Bonferroni analyses indicated that doctoral students rated vignettes 5 and 7, where the dissertation idea was suggested by the student, as significantly more ethical than vignette 1, where the advisor suggested the dissertation idea. Vignette 5 was also rated as more ethical than vignettes 3 and 4, where the idea was suggested by the advisor.

Table 2

Means and Standard Deviations of Ratings for each Vignette of the Ethicalness of Origin of Dissertation Idea and Authorship Credit

Vignette Number	Statistics	Ethicalness of Idea	Ethicalness of Author Credit
1	Mean	2.31	3.31
(29)	Std.	1.54	1.91
2	Mean	1.89	1.69
(45)	Std.	1.17	1.16
3	Mean	2.15	4.51
(47)	Std.	1.25	1.64
4	Mean	2.02	2.46
(41)	Std.	1.19	1.67
5	Mean	1.17	1.74
(43)	Std.	.44	1.58
6	Mean	1.76	1.82
(45)	Std.	1.37	1.03
7	Mean	1.31	4.18
(39)	Std.	.92	1.80
8	Mean	1.74	3.01
(35)	Std.	1.21	1.99

Note. Parenthetic numbers represent the number of respondents to each vignette. Ethicalness of idea ratings range from 1 (very ethical) to 6 (very unethical). Ethicalness of outcome ratings range from 1 (very unethical) to 6 (very ethical).

There was also a significant difference in student ratings for ethicalness of authorship credit, $F(7, 313) = 30.56$, $p < .001$. Bonferroni post hoc comparisons showed that vignettes 7 and 8, where the student originated the dissertation idea, wrote the paper, and was listed as sole or first author were rated as significantly more ethical than vignettes 2, 4, 5, and 6, where the advisor both wrote the resulting paper and was listed as either first or sole author. Vignette 1, where the advisor originated the idea but the student wrote the paper and was listed as sole author, was rated significantly more ethical than

vignette 2, where the advisor performed all three tasks, and vignettes 5 and 6 where the student originated the idea but the advisor both wrote the article and was either sole or first author. On the other hand, vignette 1 was rated as less ethical than vignettes 3, where the advisor originated the idea but the student wrote the paper as first author, and 8, where the student originated the idea and wrote the paper as first author. Vignette 3 was also rated as significantly more ethical than vignettes 4, 5, and 6, where the advisor wrote the article and was either sole of first author. These results collectively indicate that these school psychology doctoral students believe that it is not ethical for the advisor to be listed as first or sole author on a student's dissertation, even if the advisor originated the idea and wrote the resulting article.

Students who had authored papers or articles with faculty rated their collaborative experiences as generally good (a mean of 1.66, *SD* = .73, on a 4-point scale, where 1 was "excellent" and 4 was "poor"). Seventy-two percent (*n* = 143) of the 198 students who responded said that authorship was discussed with the faculty member, with 68 of these students (34%) indicating that this discussion took place before the research project began.

Discussion

Results of this survey of the beliefs of school psychology doctoral students show that students believe it is desirable for them to develop their own dissertation ideas and to be first or sole author on any paper submitted for publication that is based on the dissertation. Students also believe that it is more ethical to develop their own dissertation ideas than to adopt ones proposed by their advisors. Regarding authorship of articles resulting from dissertations, the students responding to the survey believed that it was more ethical for students to be listed as sole or first authors. This latter finding was true even when the advisor originated the dissertation idea and/or wrote the article.

These results are in agreement with APA's *Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct* (1992) that states in Section 6.23 (c), "A student is usually listed as principal author on any multiple-authored article that is based primarily on the student's dissertation or thesis." Keith-Spiegel (1994) indicated that the word "usually" should be clarified because some students "may not be interested in pursuing further outlets for the work but would readily agree to junior authorship if the professor offers to shepherd the project through publication" (p. 367).

Goodyear et al. (1992) commented that some students require considerable contribution from their advisors to the dissertation. As a result, the advisor may end up making a much greater scientific contribution to the dissertation than the doctoral student. Thus, on any publication resulting from the dissertation, there may be an ethical conflict between adhering to Section 6.23 (c) and 6.23 (b), which states that "principal authorship and other publication credits accurately reflect the relative scientific or professional contributions of the individuals involved, regardless of their relative status." Certainly one solution to this dilemma is for advisors to insist that students carry out their dissertations as largely independent projects.

Results obtained may have differed with a different sample of doctoral students. Also, students' responses may have been different if each vignette had varied the amount of work the student put into the dissertation. All vignettes had the student supervising all data collection and analyses. Several students commented on the questionnaire that they felt authorship credit and placement should be related to amount of work done. Future research should investigate this.

References

American Psychological Association. (1992). Ethical principles of psychologists and code of conduct. *American Psychologist, 47,* 1597-1611.

Bernard, J. L., & Jara, C. S. (1986). The failure of clinical graduate students to apply understood ethical principles. *Professional Psychology: Research and Practice, 17,* 313-315.

Costa, M. M., & Gatz, M. (1992). Determination of authorship credit in published dissertations. *Psychological Science, 3,* 354-357.

Curtis, M.J., Chesno Grier, J.E., Abshier, D.W., Sutton, N.T., & Hunley, S.A. (2002, June). School psychology: Turning the corner into the twenty-first century. *Communiqué, 30 (6),* 1, 5, 6.

Goodyear, R. K., Crego, C. A., & Johnston, M. W. (1992). Ethical issues in the supervision of student research: A study of critical incidents. *Professional Psychology: Research and Practice, 23,* 203-210.

Holaday, M., & Yost, T. E. (1993). Publication ethics. *Journal of Social Behavior Personality,8,* 557-566.

Keith-Spiegel, P. (1994). Teaching psychologists and the new APA ethics code: Do we fit in? *Professional Psychology: Research and Practice, 25,*362-368.

Keith-Spiegel, P., Tabachnick, B. G., Witley, B. E., Jr., & Washburn, J. (1998). Why professors ignore cheating: Opinions of a national sample of psychology instructors. *Ethics and Behavior, 8,* 215-227.

Koocher, G. P., & Keith-Spiegel, P. (1998). *Ethics in psychology: Professional standards and cases* (2nd ed.). New York: Oxford University Press.

Rose, M. R., & Fischer, K. Do authorship policies impact students' judgments of perceived wrongdoing? *Ethics & Behavior, 8,* 59-79.

Smith, T. S., McGuire, J. M., Abbott, D. W., & Blau, B. I. (1991). Clinical ethical decision making: An investigation of the rationales used to justify doing less than one believes one should. *Professional Psychology: Research and Practice, 22,* 235-239.

Appendix

Vignette Key

Vignette No.	Suggested Idea	Wrote Article	First Author	Second Author
1	Advisor	Student	Student	None
2	Advisor	Advisor	Advisor	None
3	Advisor	Student	Student	Advisor
4	Advisor	Advisor	Advisor	Student
5	Student	Advisor	Advisor	None
6	Student	Advisor	Advisor	Student
7	Student	Student	Student	None
8	Student	Student	Student	Advisor

Dissertation Vignette Questionnaire Using Vignette 1

A graduate student and the student's advisor meet to discuss a dissertation topic. Building upon the advisor's research the advisor suggests an idea that the student adopts for the dissertation. The student successfully proposes the research to the student's dissertation committee. The student supervises all data collection and analyses. The student successfully defends the dissertation and graduates. The student writes a paper based on the dissertation and submits it for publication listing the student as the only author.

Questions: Please answer each of the following questions by circling the number of the alternative you prefer.

From the student's viewpoint, how desirable was the development of the dissertation idea?

1	2	3	4	5	6
Very Desirable	Moderately Desirable	Slightly Desirable	Slightly Undesirable	Moderately Undesirable	Very Undesirable

From the student's viewpoint, how desirable was the outcome of this vignette?

1	2	3	4	5	6
Very Undesirable	Moderately Undesirable	Slightly Undesirable	Slightly Desirable	Moderately Desirable	Very Desirable

From the student's viewpoint, how ethical was the development of the dissertation idea?

1	2	3	4	5	6
Very Ethical	Moderately Ethical	Slightly Ethical	Slightly Unethical	Moderately Unethical	Very Unethical

From the student's viewpoint, how ethical was the outcome of the vignette?

1	2	3	4	5	6
Very Unethical	Moderately Unethical	Slightly Unethical	Slightly Ethical	Moderately Ethical	Very Ethical

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

U.S. Department of Education
Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI)
National Library of Education (NLE)
Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC)

ERIC

REPRODUCTION RELEASE

(Specific Document)

I. DOCUMENT IDENTIFICATION:

Title: School Psychology Graduate Students' Beliefs About Dissertation Authorship Credit

Author(s): Georgiana Shick Tryon, Josephine L. Bishop, & Teresa A. Hatfield

Corporate Source: City University of New York Graduate School & University Center

Publication Date: presented at the meeting of American Psychological Association, August 2002

II. REPRODUCTION RELEASE:

In order to disseminate as widely as possible timely and significant materials of interest to the educational community, documents announced in the monthly abstract journal of the ERIC system, *Resources in Education* (RIE), are usually made available to users in microfiche, reproduced paper copy, and electronic media, and sold through the ERIC Document Reproduction Service (EDRS). Credit is given to the source of each document, and, if reproduction release is granted, one of the following notices is affixed to each document.

If permission is granted to reproduce and disseminate the identified documents, please CHECK ONE of the following three options and sign at the bottom of the page.

The sample sticker shown below will be affixed to all Level 1 documents

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Georgiana Shick Tryon

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

1

Level 1 ☒

Check here for Level 1 release, permitting reproduction and dissemination in microfiche or other ERIC archival media (e.g., electronic) *and* paper copy.

The sample sticker shown below will be affixed to all Level 2A documents

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL IN MICROFICHE, AND IN ELECTRONIC MEDIA FOR ERIC COLLECTION SUBSCRIBERS ONLY, HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

2A

Level 2A ☐

Check here for Level 2A release, permitting reproduction and dissemination in microfiche and in electronic media for ERIC archival collection subscribers only

The sample sticker shown below will be affixed to all Level 2B documents

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL IN MICROFICHE ONLY HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

2B

Level 2B ☐

Check here for Level 2B release, permitting reproduction and dissemination in microfiche only

Documents will be processed as indicated provided reproduction quality permits.
If permission to reproduce is granted, but no box is checked, documents will be processed at Level 1.

I hereby grant to the Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC) nonexclusive permission to reproduce and disseminate these documents as indicated above. Reproduction from the ERIC microfiche or electronic media by persons other than ERIC employees and its system contractors requires permission from the copyright holder. Exception is made for non-profit reproduction by libraries and other service agencies to satisfy information needs of educators in response to discrete inquiries.

Sign here, → please

Signature: Georgiana Shick Tryon	Printed Name/Position/Title: Georgiana Shick Tryon, Professor
Organization/Address: CUNY Graduate Center - Ed. Psych. 365 Fifth Avenue New York, NY 10016	Telephone: FAX:
	E-Mail Address: gtryon@gc.cuny.edu Date: 11/14/02

American Psychological Association August 22-25, 2002 Chicago, IL

III. DOCUMENT AVAILABILITY INFORMATION (FROM NON-ERIC SOURCE):

If permission to reproduce is not granted to ERIC, *or*, if you wish ERIC to cite the availability of these documents from another source, please provide the following information regarding the availability of these documents. (ERIC will not announce a document unless it is publicly available, and a dependable source can be specified. Contributors should also be aware that ERIC selection criteria are significantly more stringent for documents that cannot be made available through EDRS.)

Publisher/Distributor:
Address:
Price:

IV. REFERRAL OF ERIC TO COPYRIGHT/REPRODUCTION RIGHTS HOLDER:

If the right to grant this reproduction release is held by someone other than the addressee, please provide the appropriate name and address:

Name:
Address:

V. WHERE TO SEND THIS FORM:

Send this form to the following ERIC Clearinghouse:

ERIC Counseling & Student Services
University of North Carolina at Greensboro
201 Ferguson Building
PO Box 26171
Greensboro, NC 27402-6171